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MR. KENDALL'S ADDRESS

TO

THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.

Our country presents a new spectacle for the contemplation of mankind. A candidate for the Presidency is asking the suffrages of our people, and at the same time refuses to answer the questions they put to him for the purpose of satisfying themselves as to the principles and policy by which he will be governed, if elected. With his own consent, a committee is interposed between him and his countrymen, not to aid him in giving frank replies to their reasonable inquiries, but to cut off direct communication, and keep his opinions from the public. A free and intelligent people, whose precious right it is to ask and obtain the views of every man who seeks their suffrages, upon every topic appertaining to their government, are bluntly told that they shall not enjoy this right, but shall take a candidate for the Presidency upon trust. They are asked to relax that "eternal vigilance," which is truly "the price of liberty," and blindly submit themselves, if not to a "King, who can do no wrong," to a Chief Magistrate who assumes the attitude of irresponsibility and surrounds himself with ministers, even before the crown of power has been placed on his head!

This candidate was nominated by a convention, not because they considered him the ablest man of their party, or at all qualified for the station, but merely because he had once been a *General*. Having seen the people place the heroic Jackson in the chair of state, notwithstanding their unceasing denunciations of "military chieftains," they weakly expected to avail themselves, in their struggle for power, of the same devotion and enthusiasm, by presenting the name of another who had worn the uniform of his country and attained to the same rank. They did not accord to the people sense enough to discriminate between the weak and inefficient chieftain, who, after a series of military blunders, fortunately for his country resigned his commission in the midst of the war, and the *real* hero who took it up and closed that war in a blaze of glory at New Orleans.

Under this fatal error, the convention, instead of presenting in an address or resolutions the principles which would control the administration of their candidate if elected, concerted a general movement throughout the Union to give eclat to their nomination by a simultaneous shout to the military glories, which, after an oblivion of twenty-five years, are now for the first time discovered to be worthy of commemoration in feasts and in song. We have accordingly seen vast assemblages collected together, at great labor and cost, not to respond to any principle, or listen to any argument, but to drown the voice of reason in the shouts of revelry,

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and lead captive the feelings of the people in a senseless excitement. Huzzas for the newly-found hero, annunciations of his poverty, of his residence in a log-cabin, and love of hard cider: the hauling of miniature log-cabins, and canoes, and cider-barrels, through the streets; the rolling of balls, and the display of banners with unmeaning mottoes; doggerel rhymes and vulgar pictures; the drinking of cider, the mumbling of gingerbread, and imitating the cries of birds and beasts, with other mummery and mockery, as disgraceful to the country as it is insulting to the people, are the new means of electioneering, by which it is vainly expected to induce the community to surrender itself, like the charmed bird, to the jaws of the wiley serpent which stands ready to devour it. By arguments like these, it is expected to persuade the freemen of America to surrender their right to know the political opinions of the candidate, and take him, for better or for worse, *gagged and guarded as he is.*

To these means of influence are added money without stint, abuse of official station and privilege without restraint, and violation of the laws without reserve. The Harrison party in Congress are leagued together in a great electioneering Association, with its "executive committee" appointing subordinate committees throughout the Union; raising money by tens of thousands to support presses, to magnify their mock hero, libel the Administration, and scatter delusion through the country; practising the most unheard-of abuses, getting subscribers to a newspaper under a promise that they shall receive it under frank, violating the law by actually franking it, and devoting their money, their talents, their privileges, and their time, not to the business of legislation for which they were elected, but to an unscrupulous and unceasing warfare upon another department of the Government. The public business is delayed, the public faith violated, and the ordinary operations of the Government obstructed, that the session of Congress may be protracted; thus furnishing the influence of public station, the facilities of the frank and money from the Treasury, to carry on their electioneering operations. In some cases electioneering tracts franked by members of Congress, weighing more than they had a right to frank, have been falsely marked "public documents," to secure their free transmission; and in others, the frank of members has been boldly *forged!* What would be said of the Executive officers here, if *they* were to form such a club, appoint such a committee, and resort to such means? Would not the very men who are now committing abuses and outrages a thousand times more aggravated than any they charge against the Administration, sound the tocsin of alarm upon a thousand hills, and startle the country with the threatening danger? And are these combinations less alarming, less corrupt, less dangerous, or less criminal, in one department of the Government than in another?

CONTEMPT FOR THE PEOPLE lies at the bottom of this whole scheme of electioneering.

The Harrison party showed this contempt in presenting "a military chieftain" as their candidate, after having for years denounced the elevation of such men as worse for the country than "war, pestilence, and famine, or any other scourge."

They show it by presenting a *sham hero* to the people, and endeavoring to persuade them that he is a *real one.*

They show it by asking the people to vote for *a gagged and guarded candidate,* who "will answer the questions of neither friends nor foes."

They show it by abandoning all argument, and throwing principle out of the contest.

They show it by their log-cabins, cider-barrels, pitchers, canoes, balls, banners, pictures, and parade, riot, and drunkenness; fit only to amuse, if they did not disgust, a London populace or a Parisian mob.

They show it by their incessant and monstrous misrepresentations of the acts of the Administration, and their causeless abuse of the men who compose it.

Where is the true-hearted American who would not be ashamed of his country, if she could, by such means, be induced to abandon her right to question candidates for office, and throw herself unconditionally into the arms of a President and a party which has no principles, or dare not avow them?

From this contempt of the people springs the opposition of the leaders of this party to the extension of the right of suffrage, and their steady attempts to corrupt it when extended. Not believing the people fit for self-government, they will not trust them with power when they can avoid it; and, whenever the opportunity presents itself, take from them that which they possess. They do not scruple to compel their dependants to vote their will, at elections, instead of their own, and so to manage their private affairs as to reward or punish more humble men for the surrender or assertion of the right of free suffrage. Upon the same principle, they do not hesitate to cheat in elections and cheat in the returns. Recall a few facts of recent occurrence, and it will be seen that I do them no injustice.

In 1838, the leaders of the present Harrison party had possession of the Government of Pennsylvania, in all its legislative and executive branches. By false registries, and the introduction of thousands of voters from abroad, they strove to elect a Governor and a majority of the House of Representatives, but were defeated. Instead of submitting to the decision of the people, they determined to disregard it and retain possession of the Government of the State at every hazard. From the county of Philadelphia, two Democratic Senators and eight Representatives had been elected, and it was so certified by a majority of the judges of the election: yet, though the Democratic majority was several hundreds, a minority of the judges sent a certificate to the office of the Secretary of State, falsely showing that the Harrison candidates had a majority. The change of these eight members from one side to the other, would give them a majority of the House of Representatives. Fortified by this false certificate, and supported by the Governor and a majority of the Senate, the Secretary of State publicly advised his party to treat the election of Governor as if it had never been held, although the Democratic candidate had a majority of thousands! On the meeting of the Legislature, he sent in the false returns, and withheld the true ones. The Senate immediately admitted the usurpers. When the Democrats of the House resisted their introduction into that body, the Harrison party proceeded separately, in conjunction with the usurpers, to organize a House and choose their officers. The Democratic members did the same thing, in conjunction with the true Representatives from Philadelphia county. But, as the Governor and a majority of the Senate were of the Harrison party, all power was in their hands; and it became evident that they intended to create, by arbitrary power, a majority in the House, and set aside the election, not only of several Senators and Representatives, but that of Governor also!

This design, more bold, considering the people and the age, than the most daring usurpations of Cæsar, Cromwell, or Napoleon, roused the spirit of '76; indignant multitudes poured into the capital; they organized a Committee of SAFETY, and prepared to assert the rights of the people. The affrighted Governor and his guilty counsellors, instead of receding from their foul design, denounced the people as rebels and determined to carry out the usurpation by force of arms! Troops were called out provided with "buckshot and ball cartridges;" the capital of the State resounded with the din of arms; and the peace of the Commonwealth seemed to be suspended upon a hair. Lest the militia of the State might show some reluctance to shoot down their own friends and subvert their own rights, the Governor had the audacity to request the aid of a body of United States regulars, then in the vicinity, and to demand of the President the aid of the army of the Union!

What, in this case, did the people ask? Nothing but the installation of their public officers, duly and constitutionally elected by large majorities. And why did not the Harrison party proceed in their monstrous design to deprive them of this dearest right of freemen; to treat the election as if it had not been held, and retain the possession of power at the point of the bayonet? Not because they relented or repented; not because they were not ready for blood and carnage, to put down the rights of the people; but because two of their number, and *two only*, refused to act out the scene, and receding from the usurping House of Representatives, left it without a quorum. As bold, unprincipled, and unscrupulous as they were, they dared not proceed when they could no longer shield their usurpation under constitutional forms.

What on this occasion was the conduct of those who now constitute the Harrison party in other States? Did they denounce the usurpers and take the side of the people? No; almost to a man, they sustained, encouraged, and defended Governor Ritner and his daring associates. The people received from them but ferocious abuse, with the epithets of traitors and rebels. The attempt to cleave down by the sword the most precious rights of freemen, was every where applauded by them, showing that the same contempt for the people pervades that party throughout the Union.

And what have we seen at the present session of Congress? The House of Representatives kept in a state of disorganization for weeks, by an attempt to force into it, as members, five men from New Jersey, when five other men, notoriously and confessedly, had a majority of the votes given at the election. The "broad seal" of the Governor, though covering a known and acknowledged fraud, was held by them more sacred than the people's right of suffrage and was considered a better title to a seat in Congress than a majority of the people's votes! This was not a Pennsylvania scene, probably because the Harrison party here had no Governor Ritner under their control to back the "broad seal" with "buckshot and ball;" but the contempt for the people, and the *will* to trample on their rights, were in both cases the same.

Freemen of the United States! Your liberties are not so safe as you may suppose. Think you, if Harrison had been President, the army of the United States would have been refused to his friends in Pennsylvania? Think you, that in such a condition of things, the people of that State could have maintained their right to a Governor and Legislature of

their own free choice, but by wading through rivers of blood ? It was at Harrisburg, on the very scene of the Ritner usurpation, and by the influence of the leaders in that desperate effort, that the nomination of Harrison was effected ! If elected, Ritner's advisers will be his advisers ; the profligacy and daringness of that faction will be transferred to Washington ; and their spirit will pervade the administration of the General Government. What have you to *expect* from it, but *what you have seen it attempt?* What, but that corruption and fraud in elections will pervade every State ? What, but that minority candidates will be thrust into the State Legislatures, and "broad seal" members into Congress, at the point of the bayonet ?

A flood of demoralization has swept over our land ; and upon some States it rests in stagnant pools, contaminating the atmosphere of liberty, and threatening death to every thing virtuous, noble, and free. It is to the *monster Bank*, which, having struggled in vain, by its blandishments, its corruptions and its terrors, to overcome the fearless and incorruptible man then at the head of the General Government, turned to the State Legislature where it found no difficulty in buying up Senators by the dozen, that the people of Pennsylvania were indebted for the profligacy exhibited in the attempt to subvert their liberties by the sword. To means furnished by the same and similar institutions, or those directly connected with them, if not even to the bankers of Europe, are the people of the United States undoubtedly now indebted, not only for the depravation of morals which threatens to break up the foundations of society, but for a large portion of the means which enable the "Executive Committee" at Washington to prosecute their war against an honest and democratic Administration. It was by violating moral obligations and plundering their own people through the Bank of England, that the British Government was enabled to keep the world in arms during the scenes of the French Revolution ; and the British party in America are profiting by the profligate example. Laws are violated with impunity ; moral obligations are scoffed at and derided ; knavery walks the streets with the bold face of honesty ; plunderers of the public and of public institutions obtain sympathy and forgiveness ; and the Administration, which sternly sets its face against these evils and their authors, is sought to be made the victim of its firmness and integrity. If bad men are to be permitted to overthrow it, by means so profligate and with motives so corrupt, what is to be expected, but that they will proceed to aggrandize themselves upon the ruins of our free Government, and the enslavement of our people ?

It will be my endeavor, as far as necessary, to vindicate the Administration from the foul aspersions cast upon it, and earnestly to inculcate—

That in the practice of a rigid morality *alone*, can men or nations justly look for happiness and safety :

That there is but one code of morals for private and public affairs :

That *pure morality* is *true democracy*, conceding to every one his right, and seeking advantages of none :

That every freeman has a right to know the political opinions of any candidate who is presented for his suffrages ; and to deny him that right, is a wrong and insult which strikes at the root of representative government, and is the adoption of a kingly principle :

That the cause of morality, freedom, and law ; the interests of agriculture, manufactures, and commerce ; the peace of the country ; the

rights of the people and the safety and improvement of their institutions ; will be best promoted and secured by the re-election of Mr. Van Buren ;

And, finally, that it is the indispensable duty of every man who wishes to preserve the blessings of an honest representative government, the rights of property, the faith of contracts, the honor of his country, and the freedom of man, to oppose, by all honorable means, the election of General Harrison, who already sets the people at defiance, while his friends mock and insult them by a childish and ridiculous mummery, fit only to amuse the wild natives of Africa.

The ferocity of the Harrison party is equal to their folly. In every moment of rising hope they cannot restrain their jeers and their taunts, their riotous parades, shouts of exultation, and groans of insult. While holding a high public station, I have seen my children spring in terror from their beds at the dead hour of midnight, in the belief that guns were fired into the windows of their chamber. It was the cannon of Federalism in the street, where its myrmidons had collected to exult over and insult their father with mock music, firing, shouts, and groans.

The God of Liberty forbid that this spirit should ever get possession of our Government! And does not every true Republican say AMEN ?

Let us rally to the rescue. Send light among the people and the Republic is safe. For myself, if it be *possible* that the people of this country *can* throw themselves into the arms of a candidate *without a tongue to speak to them*, and a party *without principles to announce*, a party already mad with the hope of power, though relying for success on nothing but their industry and skill in deluding the people ; and if my feeble powers shall enable me to do any thing to prevent it, I shall esteem the day of my resignation of the Post Office Department the most fortunate of my life, as it has been already one of the happiest.

Democrats ! I invoke your aid and co-operation.

AMOS KENDALL.

P. S. Every Democratic editor in the Union is respectfully requested to publish this address, with the annexed prospectus.

Every friend of Democracy and an honest Administration is invoked to active efforts to extend the subscription, forwarding the names and money to me, postage paid, or through postmasters, who are permitted by the post office laws and regulations to do so *in letters written by themselves.*

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